

New York: Black-Puerto Rican solidarity on the march

written by Greg Butterfield
June 16, 2020







New York — Thousands of people filled the streets of Washington Heights, Harlem and El Barrio (East Harlem) on June 14 for a militant demonstration of Black-Latinx solidarity against racist police terror.

Puerto Rican and Black Liberation flags waved side-by-side as people in these two

proud neighborhoods, historically plagued by police brutality, economic neglect and racist gentrification, once again expressed their unity with demands to “demilitarize, demobilize and defund the police.”

Sunday had earlier been slated for the annual Puerto Rican Day Parade, one of the community’s most significant cultural and political events. This year’s parade was cancelled, however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

But seeing the urgent need for solidarity with the Black-led uprising that began in Minneapolis after the police murder of George Floyd, freedom fighters in New York’s Puerto Rican community called on the community to take the streets.

Signs and banners in Spanish and English, carried by community members, remembered not only Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Rayshard Brooks, but also the many Black and Latinx victims of the New York Police Department.

The march stepped off from Mitchel Square Park on 167th Street, near the Audubon Ballroom where Malcolm X was assassinated. It gathered force as it wound through Washington Heights and Harlem.

As the roar of chanting marchers filled 125th Street, hundreds of people greeted them with a rally at the Adam Clayton Powell State Office Building. Speakers included members of the Jericho Movement for political prisoners. A banner hung at the base of the Adam Clayton Powell statue bore the logo of the Black Panthers and the demand: “Black community control of police.”

After a long standoff with police at the intersection of 125th Street and Africa Square, the march continued on to the People’s Church in East Harlem. Supporters of the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression and Struggle-La Lucha carried signs in the march calling for community control and an end to cop crimes.

